An Essay

on

The Dynamic Philosophy

Respectfully Submitted to the Faculty of the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania

By

Benjamin R. Bratt

of

Pittsburgh

"Two principles are involved in the methods of scientific investigation, the one, engendering a tendency to a conservative, the other, to a progressive state of existence. Between them exists a beautiful and co-operative relativeness which, if observed in their practical application, conduces to a more perfect and satisfactory elucidation of a subject and more brilliant results in the fields of discovery. Singly recognized they are antagonistic. That beautiful prodigality of faith by which the philosophical spiritualist conceives all created nature as the material embodiment of an imponderable, mystic power or spirit, emanates from the intellect upheld by the principle of Synthesis. To him the

world is a realm of universal life, whilst the mind, helmed by the less ethereal principle of analysis, recognizes only the manifestations of simple physical or chemical forces operating as a grand unite. It divests the infinite diversity of external objects of all inherent, or essential qualities, summarily referring their display of intrinsic force to laws expressive of their generalities of mutual connection. Science by the almost exclusive adoption of the analytical mode of research is, at present, glorying in the assumption of a general and conclusive positivism. Its progress is marked by a rapid succession of brilliant discoveries in the material world; delving into the mysteries of its formation, developing additional elementary constituents, revealing new properties, and establishing new relations. It explores the sublime

intricacies of subluminary and celestial movements, accurately determining and systematizing their peculiar phe= =nomena, and deducing the laws by which their manifestations are governed. All that is appalling, sublime, affecting, or beautiful in nature, from the sigh of the gentle zephyr to the sweep of the whirl= -wind, from the glow worm under our feet to the alter fires that blaze in the firmament of heaven, are included in its range of inquiry. These are the loftiest achievements of the positive science. It incorporates into its structure such objective conditions only as are appre= hended according to certain specific necessities of the human intellect, ab= =rogating all others as unreal or hypo= =thetical. The sphere of sensitive life is the limitation of its scope. It dis= =dains not to inquire into the ground

mystery of the causation or origin of forces in action, but confines itself to the perception of phenomena and their invariable relations or laws. This it would establish as the ultimatum of human knowledge, discarding all the bright creations of pure abstract reasoning as superfluous and transcendental.---

---It is a great desideratum for the comprehension and preservation of accumulative knowledge that it should be founded upon some general and positive basis. That every newly advanced doctrine should be so specialized as to present to the understanding the immediate impress of incontrovertible truth. The attempt of modern Science to achieve so desirable an object by adopting as its formula the phantasm of "phen-

-or mena and laws" must necessarily prove inefficient and abortive. It grapples the mind in its loftiest efforts to fathom the pervading mystery, rendering it subservient to sensuous impressions and emersing it in the slough of materialism. Sensitive experience cannot be the limitation or ultimatum of human knowledge. In the acquirement of this is perceived a successive ascendency of each intellectual power which compose the mental fabric. The infantile conditions of being exhibit merely a capacity for knowledge and an inclination to love. All those supreme qualities of the soul, the inheritance of an immortal nature, which at maturity centralize and constitute mond a perfect self-hood, seem immersed in the spontaneity of his animal organization

"The germ of intelligence is vivified by its sensitive connection with the objects of the external world. Every manifestation of its inherent power is elicited through agency of this mystic bond which unites the finite being and the infinite soul. Mind in its progressive development is gradually enfranchized from its primitive subjection to the intimations of sense, and by virtue of its divine attributes, elevated to a spiritual perception of the living, active, creative principle distinct from nature and one with man. "Thought first awakened by the beauteous objects of external nature is subsequently blended with the glowing imagery of the imagination. the fervor of which is subdued by the demon of the reflective powers. "The positive science with its attempts at the unravelment of universal wonder claims

to be only the comprehensive generali-
-zation of facts furnished by the senses
and digested by reason. But the mind
by its intrinsic might and the energy
of its constellate powers transcends
these bounds creating ideal conceptions
within itself of the great source and
essence of the controlling forces which
pervade all space. Reliance in the
accuracy of thought thus evoked is
rendered indubitable by the workings
of the great principle of faith. In
every condition of being is its influ-
ence manifested as a powerful and
guiding principle. Embodying every im-
-pulse of life, its powers, its aims, its deeds,
its aspirations. The truths of mathematics,
the principles of astronomy, the laws of
chemistry, so essential to the practical
bearings of existence, are but faiths accred-
-ited to us by certain evidences. They are the

rational discernments of a science which transcends the sphere of sensitive experience, penetrates through natures superficial aspects into its realities, into its substance and ends which constitute it and make it consistent and significant. They exhibit the universe as a vast depository of spiritual forces in action, invisible to the eye, inaudible to the ear, a theatre of an ascending series of wisdom, the perpetual ever renewed miracle of divine creation, whose existence is assured to us not by positive knowledge but by a rational credence.

In view of these successive grades in mental development, three grand conditions are manifestly requisite as furnishing a substantial foundation for philosophical and scientific researches: correct sensuous impressions; superiority of rational truths; the subserviency

of each to the intuitive and all-convict-
-ing powers of faith.

A new philosophy embody-
-ing these essential conditions is presented
to mankind as our inheritance from
our immortal genius. It assumes to
explain the operations of the restorative
influence of agents in abnormal conditions
of the organism when applied in accord-
-ance with a fundamental law of nature.
Its truthfulness, yet to be thoroughly sub-
stantiated, will be the consummation of
that grand object so long and earnestly
sought, the freedom of medical science
from chimerical speculations clothed in
the vesture ~~in the~~ of rationality, and
placed upon a basis formed by the fixed
and eternal principles of nature. In its
most comprehensive sense this Dynamic
Philosophy of Vibrancemm. teaches that the
material universe with its vast and

infinitly varied forms of structure is pervaded by an inherent, immaterial controlling power or force. By certain peculiarities, probably, of formation or composition of its material substratum, the manifestations of this ubigntary power are exhibited under a great diversity of aspects. It is evidenced in the cyclical movements of the heavenly bodies preserving that harmonious uniformity among them essential to the stability of the celestial sphere.— in the display of affinities and combinations of elementary substances— in the diversified forms of crystalization— in the processes of assimilation and disintegration which subserve the automatic movements of life— and in the perturbing influences of organic or inorganic substances upon the structural organization of mans. All changes

continually occurring as necessary conditions of life, are effected through the instrumentality of this power acting under supervisory laws instituted by a supreme intelligence. Whether or not these different phenomena are resultant from the workings of one general dynamical principle is a question involved, as yet, in deep obscurity. But the beautiful doctrine of the "correlation of Physical and Vital forces," recently enunciated with such ingenuousness and illustrative completeness, tends to dispel the mist which heretofore has enveloped the operations of the imponderable agents of nature, and upheld the belief of their identity. A reciprocal dependence is shown to exist between these forces, by virtue of which they are, under favorable circumstances, mutually convertible

into each other. This is exemplified in the case of electricity being developed from heat, and vice versa, neither of which, in fact, can be called into action without exciting the other; so of magnatism, light, chemical affinity &c. The same relation is observed between the organic forces and the physical, furnishing strong evidences of their being merely modifications of one great General force.

Upon the recognition of the universality of this force, and the capability of its modified forms acting upon each other by virtue of a reciprocal relation, is based the novel and beautiful Philosophy advanced by the illustrious founder of Homœopathy. It upholds that "in the healthy condition of man" there is an "immaterial vital principle which animates the material body, exercising an absolute sway and maintaining

all its parts in the most admirable order and harmony, both of sensation and action, so that our indwelling rational spirit may freely employ these living healthy organs for the superior purposes of our existence". "The presence of this principle is especially perceptible in the phenomena attendent upon the operations of the cerebro-spinal axis and nervous system generally. "The various active movements of the body and its susceptibility of sensuous impressions are inseparably connected with this par=
=ticular portion of the animal structure. It is a material condition necessary for the display of our intrinsic force, which is subjected to governing laws and susceptible of being acted upon by other relative forces; and it may be affirmed that by virtue of this circumstance, cura=
=tive results follow the administration of

remedial agents. For morbific influences disturbing the functional harmony of the organism, affect primarily this dynamic principle presiding in the nervous system. According to the particular changes effected in its action by the deteriorating influence, a condition of receptivity to the action of the agent specific to the abnormal state induced, is engendered. If, by any possible means, the inherent power of the curative agent be so adapted as directly to operate upon the power in the organism, in obedience to a law which governs the relation of the two forces, there is, as it were, a unity of action, a combined-co-operative power brought to bear for the expulsion of the morbific influence - Respecting this point Hahnemann thus philosophizes - "By the operations of injurious influences, from without upon the healthy organism - influences which

disturb the harmonious play of the func=
=tions- the vital principle, as a spiritual
dynamis, cannot otherwise be assailed
and affected than in a (dynamic) spiritual
manner; neither can such morbid distur=
=ances, or in other words, such diseases, be
removed by the physician, except in like
manner, by means of the spiritual (dynamic
virtual) countervailing agency of the suitable
medicines acting upon the same vital
principle, and this action is communi=
=cated by the sentient nerves everywhere dis=
tributed in the organism; so that curative
~~re=~~
~~sults~~ medicines possess the faculty of restoring,
and do actually restore health, with concomit=
=ant functional harmony, by a dynamic influ=
ence only, acting upon the vital energies, after the
morbid alterations in the health of the patient
which are evident to the senses (the totality of the
symptoms) have represented the disease to the at=
tentive and observant physician as fully as may

be requisite to effect a cure." He declares, with the emphasis of truthful conviction, that Similia Similibus Curentur is the formula expressive of the relation between the dynamic principle of the ~~drug~~ organism, and the inherent dynamic principle of the drug; and that by the peculiar process of preparation, by succussion and trituration, the latter is made to assume a state capable of affecting the former by a direct and immediate impression. "The success which has attended the practical workings of these teachings has been signally triumphant, and portends ~~its~~ their eventual general adoption as constituting the true philosophy of medicine." Hahnemann advances no explanation of the mode by which imponderable medicinal agents — rendered such by the method of preparation — effect curative results, further than the suggestive one founded upon the belief that "the ordinary morbific principles have only a conditional and often

very subordinate influence's, while the medicinal powers exercise one that is absolute, direct, and greatly superior to that of the former." His adherents, however, have made various attempts to elucidate this intricate point. That the medicinal qualities of a drug are rendered more active by the comminution of its particles, or separation of its constituent molecules, is a fact too well attested to be longer mooted. But to assume that the efficacy of highly attenuated remedies is dependent upon this mechanical division alone, as contended for by some, is absolutely untenable. It may, and does, develope the medicinal power and make it available in accomplishing its specific purpose, directly and speedily, but no other rational inference can be adduced of its action, than that it is by virtue of its relation to the controlling power of the body. The immediate relief from acute suffering which

invariably follows the administration of the proper homoeopathic agent, precludes the possibility of its acting otherwise. them by a direct and immediate impression upon the nervous system, through which it is conveyed to the part affected. How the phenomena of cure is thus effected is not, in the present state of human knowledge, demonstrable in physical perfectness. But the logical deductions of reason, convince the mind that it is by a kind of reciprocity existing between these dynamic forces. Analogy furnishes proof of such a relation in the physical derangements following mental psychical depressions or excitements; likewise in in the "Correlation of the Physical and Mental forces." Because it essays to explain natural operations which are beyond the reach of sensual perception, this beautiful Philosophy has been decried by materialistic partisans as a loose imaginative conception. But it is founded

in rational truth, its principles are purely scientifical, and as such, it is destined to an eternal permanence. It has been shown above that true knowledge overleaps crude sensuous impressions; that Reason and Faith form the great mental compass which conducts the soul in holy, billowing thoughts toward the shores of eternity, imparting to it controlling, permanent, ineradicable instincts, which it is the function of Science to illustrate, fill out, and intensify. Any discrepancies which may arise between these in the progress of discovery, it is the part of Science to reconcile them. But when that period shall arrive when they are no longer considered at heart incompatible, when Science shall become the animate body of Faith, and Faith the living soul of Science, the budding poetry of true Knowledge shall ripen into a history three happy in its records, for it shall enroll the trophied poem - the ~~rap~~ rhapsody of a progress epic in its grandeur, pastoral in its peace, and lyric in its harmony.